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Letter dated 1 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the worsening of the security situation which has resulted from an escalation of violence and terrorism perpetrated against Israel by Palestinian terrorists in recent days.

Early this morning, Assaf Hershkovitz, 31 years old and the father of two children, was murdered in an ambush when his vehicle was fired upon and overturned on the road between Ofra and Beit El. Hershkovitz is the son of Arieh Hershkovitz, 55, who died in a similar attack on 29 January 2001 which was referred to in my letter dated 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103).

In the afternoon of 30 April 2001, Esther Sa'adah and her daughter Ayelet, 26, narrowly escaped injury when a bomb planted inside their car exploded in the community of Rafiah Yam.

On Sunday, 29 April 2001, a suicide bomber blew himself up close to a busload of 40 junior high-school students who had left the community of Shavei Shomron. The protective armour of the bus prevented injuries. Minutes before the explosion, the suicide bomber had passed two IDF jeeps but chose instead to target the school bus. That same afternoon, several mortar shells were fired at the community of Kfar Darom and two additional explosive devices were discovered in Netanya.

This past Saturday, 28 April 2001, a barrage of Palestinian mortar fire on the community of Nezer Hazani wounded five teenagers at a youth club. Also on Saturday, an Israeli civilian was murdered in a terrorist drive-by shooting near Wadi Ara and a Romanian labourer was stabbed by a Palestinian man as the two travelled in the same taxi.

These recent attacks, in addition to the approximately 20 shooting incidents which occur daily, are merely the latest incidents in the ongoing Palestinian terrorist campaign against Israel. I have detailed earlier attacks in my letters dated 23 April 2001 (A/55/910-S/2001/396), 16 April 2001 (A/55/901-S/2001/364), 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001

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(A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

This situation is clearly unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue. Regrettably, the Palestinian leadership still refuses to comply with its obligations to prevent terrorist activity against Israel.

Despite the persistent threat of terrorism, Israel has taken substantive measures to ease living conditions of the civilian population in the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. To that end, 15,000 work permits have already been issued to Palestinians seeking employment in Israel; roads have been opened throughout the territories; international crossings to Egypt and Jordan have been opened; and controls on the movement of merchandise have been relaxed.

The Government of Israel is fully committed to regional peace and stability and will persevere in its quest to achieve these objectives for the benefit of all the peoples of the Middle East. At the same time, it cannot countenance continuous daily attacks on its citizens and will persist in fighting terrorism — the single greatest threat to peace and stability in the region.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 164, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative